

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 166
By Head

A RESOLUTION to honor the 1997 NCAA Women's Basketball
Champion, the Tennessee Lady Volunteers.

WHEREAS, nowhere in the annals of women's basketball has a coach and her program
so dominated the sport as have heralded coach Pat Summitt and her University of Tennessee
Lady Volunteers; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Vols victoriously defended their 1996 National Title in Cincinnati by
swatting the Lady Monarchs of Old Dominion University, 68-59, a team that had beaten them
earlier in the season by 11 points; and

WHEREAS, the victory establishes UT as one of only two programs to have repeated as
NCAA champions, and the first team to repeat in 13 years; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee took 10 losses into the Final Four, the most of any national
semifinalist in the tournament's storied history, but Coach Summitt and the Lady Vols overcame
the regular season losses and fortified their position as the preeminent women's collegiate
basketball program in the nation with the win; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Vols sailed into the Queen City on the heels of their drubbing of
Coach Geno Auriemma's top-ranked and previously unbeaten UConn Huskies in the Midwest
Regional championship game, a game matching two of the country's premier basketball
programs; and

70237652

70237652

004856

00485647

WHEREAS, in this fiercely contested matchup, the Lady Vols jumped on UConn early and never relinquished the lead, despite a Herculean comeback attempt by the Big East Conference champion, a team that had also beaten Tennessee decisively earlier in the season; and

WHEREAS, in their quest to reach the Regional Championship game in Iowa City, the Lady Vols corralled second-seeded Colorado with a decisive 75-67 thrashing of the Buffaloes; earlier they defeated Grambling 91-54 in the tournament's opening round and the Ducks of Oregon 76-59 in second-round action; and

WHEREAS, the semifinal contest pitted UT against a talented Notre Dame team, with the Lady Vols' inspired second-half defense and the sharp-shooting Holdsclaw leading the way over the Fighting Irish 80-66; and

WHEREAS, in the championship bout with ODU, the Lady Vols established their defensive intensity from the outset, pressuring every Old Dominion dribble, contesting every pass and confronting every shot, forcing the Lady Monarchs into turnovers in four of its first five possessions; and

WHEREAS, the combination of "Thunder" (Chamique Holdsclaw) and "Lightning" (Kyra Elzy), with an assist from Niya Butts, stormed the court defensively and shut down ODU's offense, holding point guard Ticha Penicheiro to 10 points and eight assists; and

WHEREAS, Coach Summitt's masterful game plan was executed to perfection by the Lady Vols; with the victory, she has surpassed the late Adolph Rupp of Kentucky in career NCAA crowns and is now second only to legendary UCLA Coach John Wooden; and

WHEREAS, the Lady Vols were led by tournament Most Valuable Player Chamique Holdsclaw, the pride of Astoria, New York, and all of Orangeland, who tallied 24 points in the ODU victory; Chamique forced a 49-all deadlock with 6:48 remaining in the game, then contributed to UT's next 14 points to stave off a valiant second-half rally by the Lady Monarchs; and

WHEREAS, sophomore Kellie Jolly dished out a championship game-record 11 assists and finished with a Final Four record of 20 assists in two games; her nearly miraculous return from an October knee injury and first-round ankle sprain provided a major spark to Pat Summitt's charges. For her efforts Kellie claimed a spot on the all-tournament team with Chamique Holdsclaw, an honor most befitting of a former Warriorette from Sparta; and

WHEREAS, for their brilliant performances, seniors Abby Conklin and Pashen Thompson completed their UT careers in fine fashion, combining for 20 points on eight-of-nine field-goal shooting; Abby's clutch free throws and three-point shooting and Pashen's smothering defense and excellent board work were decisive in the championship victory; and

WHEREAS, other Lady Vols making key contributions to the team's success included Tiffani Johnson, whose unyielding presence under the basket and steady defense contributed to the team's solid frontcourt play; Kyra Elzy and Niya Butts, both of whom turned in very "un-freshmanlike" performances and whose futures on "The Hill" are unlimited, along with those of Brynae Laxton, Misty Greene, Laurie Milligan and LaShonda Stephens; and

WHEREAS, others deserving of special commendation include Coach Summitt's outstanding staff of assistant coaches: Mickie DeMoss, Holly Warlick and Al Brown, UT Women's Athletic Director Joan Cronan for her unflagging support of women's athletics, UT Women's Sports Information Director Debby Jennings and her assistants, and head athletic trainer Jenny Moshak and her assistants, all of whom have contributed immeasurably to the success of the Lady Vols this season; and

WHEREAS, Coach Summitt's 10th trip to the Final Four and five national championships in 23 years at the helm of the Tennessee program stand unparalleled in women's athletics; her program is a model of consistency for other schools to emulate, as evidenced by UT's appearance in all 16 NCAA tournaments; and

WHEREAS, the 1997 Lady Vols have played with heart and with the knowledge that the strong survive; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we honor Coach Pat Summitt and the University of Tennessee Lady Volunteers for winning the 1997 NCAA Women's Basketball Championship and extend to them our best wishes for every future success both on and off the court.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That appropriate copies of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copies.